



Riverside General Plan Program

Zoning and Subdivision Meeting Friday, June 6, 2003

On Friday, June 6, 2003, City of Riverside Planning staff and the General Plan consultant team led by Cotton/Bridges/Associates and MIG held a meeting focused on potential changes to the zoning and subdivision ordinances. The meeting was attended largely by developers, engineering firms, and entitlement assistance companies. Attendees included:

Planning Commission Chairperson, Dave Leonard
Design Review Board Chairperson Kenneth Sutter
Kathy Tegeler, Rick Engineering
Steve Kroh, Kroh/Boeske Architects, Inc.
Dick Frick, Cole & Frick Architects
Doug Shackelton, Canty Engineering Group, Inc.
Tom Hunt, Hunt Group
Dan Milich, Fairfield Residential LLC
Jim Guthrie
Andy Bodewin, Hawarden Development
Doug Jacobs
Mary Rauschenburg, Empire Companies

Attendees were provided an overview of the General Plan Program and were provided a summary of the community visioning process conducted to-date.

Comments are organized around the following vision themes:

- How we work
- How we live
- How we get around

Comments that pertain to general planning processes are separately categorized.

How we work

The City needs to have an adequate revenue base to do any of the visioning things. The City has a shortage of industrial land. Annexation (of additional industrial land) has limited ability to be the solution.

Seventy-two (72) % of Riversiders commute out of town every day. What they really want is to work here – even to take a pay cut. We need real jobs with benefits. Until we provide land for industrial use, this isn't going to happen.

The City Council doesn't have a citywide view but a fiefdom mentality. We are losing a lot of commercial development to Corona. We need to be a "big girl" city now.

The City isn't attracting business because we don't have adequate executive housing.

We do have office space in town – but very limited – it seems to always have parking and service problems. Insurance companies and others couldn't find the space here to develop what they want with the floor space and parking space they need. Back in 1980s, the tallest building you could do downtown was two stories. This is not financially feasible.

The City may not have too much commercial; maybe it's just spread out too much and not concentrated appropriately

A Jobs-Housing balance is critical; the City needs to look at getting more industrial land. March JPA land west of I-215 is not in SOI? (Per Ken Gutierrez, this land controlled by the March JPA.)

How we live

Proposition R and Measure C limit development of higher-end homes. Six thousand acres of Riverside are tied up; you can't build a road through it.

We are told to do infill development, but neighbors in the vicinity want to dictate what development should be.

The planning mentality is anti-urban. Mission Grove, a master-planned community, has been held to two-story apartments. We should have built 60 units per acre. There should be higher density nodes – ought to be looked at. Citywide, the highest multifamily you could once do is two-story. (You could go higher with a variance, leading to shaky variance findings.)

The City has to grant a suite of "usual" variances for multi-family projects, typically 7 to 8 variances for a multifamily project

There are too many obstacles to building housing. We have the most restrictions on high-end housing of any city I've ever been in. Lot size, house height – all are very restricted. This is #1 problem with creating jobs in Riverside.

Public art dedications would add layer of uncertainty to a project. A one percent financial dedication would make more sense than having developer do art personally; individual sites may not be best locations for art.

The residential fire sprinkler requirement may need to be put on the table.

How we get around

We have a circulation element but it doesn't get implemented. For example, Overlook and Alessandro are not complete. The City was supposed to have a traffic study to look at everything, but funding got cut off. Perhaps something needs to be done outside of the political process to make things happen. Growth is continuing and the streets aren't keeping up.

The Alessandro widening was railroaded by a citizens' group. This was all about the fiefdom mentality of the City Council.

The City has strict landscaping requirements for developments, but they do nothing in street medians, which look in disarray. Look at Alessandro, Canyon Crest, Chicago, Arlington. Other communities place more emphasis on median maintenance. The median fund doesn't always lead to medians getting done; the money often sits there.

For one median project on Alessandro, we had proposed low-maintenance, low-water plants and trees. The City told us "We want grass and trees", which have relatively high maintenance and are water-consuming.

The County-imposed "Traffic Uniform Mitigation Fees" – some of this should be coming back to the City – \$330 million eventually?

Government process comments

The worst thing that could happen is to have public involvement in planning process. The City always says "Let's get more public input."

The City Hall culture is over-regulatory. The City has this bad reputation. Someone from the outside should look at changing the City's corporate culture. We spent half a million dollars replanning downtown. Not one thing has happened because of the plan – now there are 2-3 inches of new rules. Let's not repeat this mistake citywide. The Zoning Ordinance is Riverside's federal tax code – when you try to regulate every single detail of everything that's done, you get an unwieldy document. We need to leave room for creativity without a heavy regulatory burden.

Get rid of the RC zone; it's written vaguely and allows for too many lawsuits. There is too much room for judgment in how this is written.

We have laws for keeping drainages clear which are an administrative nightmare for staff to deal with this. All of this would make building executive housing more difficult.

We would love to eliminate the design review board. Things shouldn't go to public hearings unless there are problems.

The City can set design themes, but these should be concrete and clear about what can be done while leaving them less open for judgment and interpretation.

The Council micromanages, which precludes dealing with anything substantial. It takes three public hearings to deal with shutter colors.

The RC zone has done more damage to city of Riverside than anything else. The Council needs to take the lead in changing this.

The City won't just give parameters, but wants to micromanage. The result is less product.

Riverside is pretty fair with fees compared to neighbors like Fontana. Kohl's store fees were lower here than others.

The City of Oceanside established an administrative approval process if a project met certain criteria. Developers get preliminary feedback from actual people who will review the application before a formal application is made.

Riverside a charter city; it's a good idea to exploit this opportunity for different development review processes.

It's hard to get signs done. Castle Park had a very hard time.

There needs to be greater consistency between the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance.